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HARBORWALK PUBLIC INFORMATION DOCUMENT
PHASE I REPORT

DECEMBER 1989

SUMMARY

Media Matrix, Inc., has completed the Phase I Scope of Work outlined in our contract to produce a HARBORWALK Public Information Document for the Boston Redevelopment Authority. Throughout this report, we have used the term "brochure" or "public information document" to represent the end product of our services. Design options for this piece (brochure, poster, kit, etc.) are still undetermined and will be finalized upon completion of research and a creative concept presentation to the project review committee.

Our services for the design and production of this document include the written and graphic materials, photography, illustrations, layout, typesetting, copying, editing, proofreading and printing.

This Phase I report (Background Research) summarizes our research, conclusions, and recommendations for the HARBORWALK public information document. Its purpose is to define the directions for the information piece and to elicit suggestions and comments from members of the project review committee, and to serve as a milestone for approvals.

The public information piece, along with the signage currently being designed, should give this project an identity of its own and should help create a public interest in and increased usage of the Boston Redevelopment Authority's HARBORWALK.

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PHASE I Scope of Work

Under the contract specifications, Media Matrix, Inc., was charged with specific tasks under PHASE I - Background Research.

TASKS:

1. Review all existing information on and related to the HARBORWALK project including: existing conditions, proposed HARBORWALK plans and guidelines, history of Boston's waterfront and harbor, proposed public and private projects impacting HARBORWALK, and other resource materials provided and/or recommended by the Authority.
2. Carry out site visits in the area.
3. Meet with Authority staff** for:
 - background briefing on project history and scope
 - discussion of proposed ideas related to the brochure including: goals and objectives, contents of text and key points to be highlighted, design concepts, format, types of photography, graphics, illustrations, artwork, and any other aspects.
4. Complete all other research for text and visuals.

**Our goal has been to coordinate our public information document work with that of Selbert Design, the firm chosen to design the signage for the HARBORWALK project. We thought it best to postpone a joint coordination meeting that we had scheduled for PHASE I until further along in the design process, as a meeting at that time would be more beneficial to both design firms.

HARBORWALK RESEARCH

Media Matrix has completed its initial research phase of the HARBORWALK brochure project and is prepared to move forward into PHASE II, the actual written treatment/copy and rough designs, and to coordinate efforts with the signage design project and internal BRA review committees.

In preparation for written copy and rough design, we have completed the following research:

We have read a variety of background materials supplied to us by BRA staff. Some of our most helpful research materials include:

- Frederick Law Olmstead and the Boston Park System
Cynthia Zaitzevsky
- Northern Avenue Bridges Study
Todd Lee/Clark/Rozas Associates, Inc., 1988
- Water Transportation in Boston Harbor
City of Boston, BRA, 1989
- Boston Harbor Pier Study
Mintz Associates, 1987
- HARBORWALK: Guidelines for Phase I
Draft, BRA, 1987
- HARBORPARK: A Plan to Manage Growth
1989
- Handout and Materials for the Central Artery and Third Harbor Tunnel Program
Secretary of Transportation
- Press Kits: HARBORPARK Neighborhood Waterfront Tour
BRA, August 1989
- HARBORPARK: a Framework for Planning and Discussion
City of Boston, BRA, 1984
- Citizen's Guide for Zoning in Boston
BRA

- Prototype Docking Standards for Boston Harbor
Childs Engineering Corp., Nov. 1984
- New England Aquarium: A Report to the Charlestown Community
June, 1989
- Boston Harbor Islands State Parks 1986 Masterplan
DEM
- Physical Changes in Programming in and around the Fort Point Channel
Greater Boston Chamber of Commerce, June 1988
- HARBORPARK Interim Design Standards for Inner Harbor
City of Boston, BRA
- HARBORPARK Planning References Materials (Bibliography)
1984

HARBORWALK INTERVIEWS

We have completed a number of interviews with key people connected with HARBORWALK. They have been extremely valuable in developing a solid orientation on the project's history and dynamics. Following are some brief comments on the more prominent interviews. Support was unanimous. Most offered good, strong quotes if we wish to use them.

John Prescott - New England Aquarium, Executive Director

Mr. Prescott came to Boston from California and was surprised at how little access there was to the waterfront. He described his involvement in providing public access around the Aquarium and offered a strong commitment to maximum public access at the Aquarium's new site. He noted that when the Aquarium was built in the 1960s, it was faced away from the Harbor. The new design will face the sea--a good metaphor.

Arthur Lane - Boston Shipping Association, President

Mr. Lane offered a vivid picture of the old waterfront--"a lively, personable, dirty place with bars, pool halls and warehouses"--and traced the history to the present. He noted that because the waterfront has always been here, people have tended to overlook it. He is particularly concerned that development of HARBORWALK include adequate funds for constant maintenance.

Emilie Pugliano - Chairperson, North End / Waterfront Neighborhood Association

Ms. Pugliano noted how development of HARBORWALK has been a learning process. At first, most people involved had awareness of only one aspect of the waterfront--residential, recreational, or commercial. As the project has proceeded, a broader sense of the waterfront's variety has become clearer. She feels the initial tendency toward exclusive use by wealth residents has been changed into a better mix of uses.

Rick Nolan - Boston Harbor Cruises, President

Mr. Nolan gave an overview of changes along the Harbor during the last 25 years. He feels HARBORWALK is important because a lot of Boston's history has been lost and this is a perfect opportunity to renew it. As such, he is particularly interested in the design of the signs--he wants to be sure they contain entertaining historical information.

Bill Ferullo - North End Community Development Corporation

He is the second generation of a family which has lived all their lives one block from the water and described the tremendous changes which have taken place. He believes strongly that all citizens must have access to the water regardless of economic status and that vigilance will be required to keep up the momentum HARBORWALK has begun. He also sees the revival of Boston's history as one of the project's critical benefits.

Joe Breitenecker - Beacon Management, President

Mr. Breitenecker described the development of Rowe's Wharf in the context of how developers can not only act to provide greater access to the waterfront, but can also act to encourage other players to provide access. He spoke very eloquently about the impact of HARBORWALK on the life of the city--how it has already changed how people move along the waterfront, how it has transformed the waterfront into "a festive public place." He is concerned about the project's future momentum and hopes tougher economic time will not weaken support.

Lorraine Downey, Chairperson, Harborpark Advisory Committee

One of the most influential actors in the creation and progress of HARBORWALK, Ms. Downey traced the history of the project and offered a concise philosophical basis for the project grounded in the people's universal right of access to the waterfront regardless of economic status. She feels the momentum of HARBORWALK is tied to increasing public awareness of their legal right of access. Once enough people become aware of this right, the project cannot be stopped.

Bob Kenney - Kenney Development Corporation, President

In a brief interview, Mr. Kenney expressed unqualified support for HARBORWALK and praised the BRA for its role.

Larry Dwyer - Boston Parks Department, Commissioner

Mr. Dwyer spoke of HARBORWALK's connection to the system of Boston parks--an extension of the Emerald Necklace. He believes it shows how the city has successfully "built itself into its environment" and that it will raise interest in the Harbor Islands. He sees some tough negotiations ahead, but believes the tools are coming into place in the form of supportive zoning and state law.

Additional interviews will be scheduled with other key people related to the HARBORWALK project, for example:

- Mayor Raymond Flynn
Mayor, City of Boston
- Stephen Coyle
Director, Boston Redevelopment Authority
- Paul Barrett
Assistant Director, Harbor Planning and Development
- John DiVillars
Secretary, Executive Office of Environmental Affairs
- Marilyn Swartz-Lloyd
Director, Economic Development Industrial Corporation
- Ann Aylward
Maritime Director, Massachusetts Port Authority
- Members of key representative groups from the general public

Treatment BRA HARBORWALK Brochure

(1) Purpose of Brochure

Although the brochure is intended as an "all purpose" informational piece for wide distribution, certain target audiences are particularly important:

- * visitors to Boston (tourists);
- * VIPs from other cities and countries (dignitaries);
- * citizens of Boston;
- * Boston's business community;
- * neighborhoods impacted by HARBORWALK;
- * city and state officials.

The basic purposes of the brochure are to:

- * create interest, excitement, and awareness of HARBORWALK among the general public;
- * educate target audiences about the scope and progress of the project;
- * generate support for HARBORWALK from key constituencies to insure continued momentum (government, neighborhoods, business community, and the general public);
- * present a broad view of the BRA's innovative vision of modern urban development.

(2) Theme

The basic theme will be "renewal"--renewal of the Waterfront, the Harbor, and of Boston. This theme is appropriate because:

- * it's true: since its low ebb in the 1950s and early 1960s, Boston has rebounded to become one of the nation's premiere cities; the late 1960s and 1970s saw a renewal of downtown Boston and the business district, followed in the early 1980s by renewal of residential housing and the neighborhoods; now we are seeing renewal of the Harbor in the 1990s through massive clean-up efforts, and renewal of commerce and business along the Waterfront; this most recent renewal is part of a larger picture which paints Boston as a city which has come back.

- * it's dynamic: HARBORWALK, like Boston itself, is an ongoing process; neither at its beginning or its end, it is a project in motion; the theme of renewal captures this motion, supporting a visionary concept which is unfolding with each passing month;
- * it's positive and forward-looking: urban centers are faced with serious problems which command headlines and public attention; on some fronts, the future of many U.S. cities appears bleak; Boston needs to promote a strong sense of a healthy future in order to continue its progress; the theme of renewal fixes attention on better days ahead.

(3) Tone

The tone of the brochure will be entertaining, upbeat, and informative. Vocabulary and sentence structure will be keyed to a wide audience.

(4) Copy Structure and Elements

The copy will be structured as a narrative by an unseen guide who takes the reader for "a walk along the Harbor." A mix of information and anecdote will orient the reader to HARBORWALK by presenting it one section at a time within a larger context which captures the scope of the whole project. This will allow the reader to absorb a vast undertaking while feeling comfortable about experiencing HARBORWALK in smaller, more manageable pieces.

The brochure will open with a preface offering an overview of HARBORWALK to set a broad context in support of each section. Each section will then offer history, anecdote, and specific information about a part of HARBORWALK--supported by appropriate maps, artwork, and photography. An upbeat, forward-looking summary will set the reader's sights on the future.

Copy elements will include:

- * HARBORWALK'S philosophical framework;
- * an overview of the project;
- * key players and organizations involved;
- * historic information and anecdote;
- * guidance to specific activities and features;
- * a look at HARBORWALK'S future.

By presenting HARBORWALK as a whole which can be experienced in parts, the brochure respects the fact that, while various parts of the project are completed, HARBORWALK remains disjointed. An important function of the brochure will be to address this reality while sustaining project momentum by looking beyond the present to the vision of a completed HARBORWALK.

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